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EMANCIPATION

IN THE

WEST INDIES.

BY

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THE substance of the following Essay was given in the form of a Lecture at Concord, and afterwards in Boston, where it was printed in *The Pine and Palm*. The writer has likewise furnished eight articles for the *Springfield Republican*, embodying the same views, but presented in a different form. He wishes, in this way, to contribute to the public information concerning a matter unhappily but little understood even in New England. Doubtless there are errors in these pages, but they are not those of intention.

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Sidney Smith mentions a critic who would never read a book till after he had reviewed it; "because," he said, "reading is apt to bias the mind." King James I. used to wonder that his judges could decide any case after they had heard both sides; "for if I hear but the one party," said he, "my judgment is clear; but when they have both told their story, by my soul! I cannot tell what to say." Something like the wisdom of these two sages seems to have taken possession of the American mind on the question of Emancipation. There are people enough to advance the theory; there are more than enough to denounce it, and cry out on its dangers and horrors; but few of either party have taken the trouble to inform themselves of the facts. For the abolition of Slavery is not a mere theory, like the hypothesis of an open sea at the North Pole, which they say Lieut. Maury believed in, because he heard there were whales in Baffin's Bay, with their noses pointing to the north,—no, it is a great historical fact, and we are to judge of it as we do of other facts, less by the arguments advanced in its favor than by the results which have attended it. Let us consider, then, this most important topic—Emancipation as a Fact, not as a Theory,—confining the inquiry to Negro Emancipation in the West Indies.

What should we think of a man who

should today gravely raise the question whether the Atlantic can be crossed by steamships,—whether a Sharpe's rifle is better than a crossbow, or a power press than a monk's inkhorn and sheepskin? Should we not imagine he had strayed away from Kentucky or the office of the *Boston Courier*? Yet the facts which prove the safety and profit of Emancipation are less recent than the success of ocean steamships, against which Lardner prophesied in vain; nay, they are older than the bold contrivances of Fulton, which, within half a century, have revolutionized commerce and maritime warfare. They lie at our very door; we have only to look at them to be convinced.

Yet, so inveterate are the prejudices which our unfortunate political and commercial sins have brought upon us, that not one person in a hundred, it is safe to say, is acquainted with the truth of the West Indian experiment of freedom. In the British, French, and Danish West Indies, and in Hayti, together with the South African colonies of Bourbon, Mauritius and the Cape of Good Hope, about 1600 000 slaves of the African race, have been set free since 1792, or within seventy years. Of these, half a million were liberated in Hayti, in 1793; 100 000 more in the same island a few years later; 770 370 by England, in 1834-5; and about 260 000 by

France, Denmark, and Sweden, in 1848. It is, then, 14 years since the last act of liberation, 28 since the most important one, and 69 since the first. There still remain in Slavery, about 6750 000 Africans on the continent and islands of America; that is to say, nearly 4000 000 in the United States, nearly 2000 000 in Brazil, 750 000 in Cuba, and Porto Rico, and 50 000 in the Dutch possessions.

The slaves of St. Domingo were set free under martial law, amid the disorders of the first French Revolution; those of Great Britain were led into liberty in time of profound peace, by carefully prepared statutes; those of France and Denmark during the Revolutionary year of 1848, but without the interposition of martial law. We have here, then, all the possible conditions of a community,—peace, war, and that intermediate state which we call Revolution. If the experiment had failed in any of these cases, we might think it owing to peculiar circumstances; if it had failed in all we might think the policy a mistaken one, at least, so far as these Islands are concerned; if it has succeeded in all, shall we not say it will also succeed every where? Let it be noticed that the number of slaves set free is about two-fifths of those in this country; or, to be more exact, as many as are now in the States of Delaware, Maryland, Kentucky, Virginia, Tennessee, Missouri, Arkansas, Louisiana, Texas, and Florida. But while the 1 600 000 freedmen occupied an area of less than 300 000 square miles, these ten States have an area of 600 000 square miles,—a circumstance very favorable to Emancipation; while the climate of none of them is such as to exclude the white man from active labors, as in the West Indies.

At the period of emancipation, St. Domingo presented a condition of things somewhat like our own at this moment, but much more like what ours may be a year hence if we do not avail ourselves of the teachings of experience. For three years the colony had been torn by civil wars between the whites and mulattoes, in which the negroes had taken little part. The Spaniards, in alliance with the revolted slaves of 1791, and in the interest of the exiled Bourbons, had invaded the country, and occupied several important places. The English, then as now eager to destroy a commercial rival, were in treaty with the planters to invade the island also. The French Republic, represented in St. Do-

mingo by two commissioners, Sonthonax and Polverel, was on the point of losing the rich colony. The commissioners had but a thousand French soldiers, a few hundred mulattoes, and the fragment of loyal slaveholders, to oppose so many enemies. At this crisis, by a bold act of justice, the very thought of which they had repelled four months before, they brought to the French cause the powerful aid of 500 000 negroes. On the 29th of August, 1793, they declared all the slaves free. Just three weeks after, the English troops landed, but it was too late. On the 4th of February, 1794, the National Convention confirmed the proclamation of the Commissioners, and abolished slavery in the other colonies. In June of the same year, Toussaint Louverture, with 5000 men, who till then had fought under the Spanish flag, forced himself into the chief city, released the French General, and put himself and his negro soldiers at the orders of the Republic. From that hour the fortune of the war was changed. The English were driven out, (1798) the Spanish retired, and early in 1801, Toussaint proclaimed the French Republic in the Spanish portion of the Island, already ceded to France by the treaty of 1795, thus confirming the liberation of 100 000 more slaves who had been owned by the Spaniards.

In the meantime, war alone had not occupied the great genius of this negro warrior and statesman. Having become virtually Governor of the colony, in 1796 he had set himself to the task of organizing free labor,—a work begun by the French Commissioners in 1794. Sonthonax, returning from an absence in France, in 1796, was astonished at the prosperity which he saw. After the expulsion of the English, in 1798, Toussaint recalled the fugitive planters, gave them their former slaves for hired laborers, and opened the ports to free trade. To direct and enforce his regulations, he put the whole Island under military government, and supported his system of labor, when resisted, by the bayonet. The fruits of this sagacious policy were instantly visible. Commerce returned to the unfortunate Island; labor flourished; the planters grew rich; the condition of the laborers was wonderfully improved; the Government was respected, and every thing promised well for the future.

Suddenly, all this prosperity was again destroyed—not by the negroes, who had created it—but by the stupendous folly of Na-

poleon. Yielding to the urgency of the emigrant planters, and of Josephine, herself a creole of Martinique, in 1802 Napoleon sent an immense army to St. Domingo, treacherously seized Toussaint, and imprisoned him in France, where he soon died of neglect. At the same time, he re-established Slavery and the Slave Trade in all the French colonies except St. Domingo, proposing to do so there when he should have conquered it. But his vast armies were destroyed by war and disease, and in 1804 the French were finally driven from the Island.

Since then, the fortunes of Hayti have been various, but, on the whole, creditable to her people; especially when we remember that when she gained her independence, nearly half her people were slaves, who had been imported from Africa, and that nine-tenths of them had only the vicious training of slavery to fit them to be citizens. They have increased in population and in wealth, in spite of the exactions of France and Spain, and our own most illiberal treatment of them. Their Government has been more stable than that of Mexico, or the South American Republics; their institutions show an honest effort for liberty, under the restraints of law; their literature, though scanty, will endure a comparison with that of Cuba or of Canada.

But whatever have been the misfortunes of Hayti, Emancipation was not their cause. They began three years before the slaves were freed; they ceased when the negro Toussaint acquired power; they began again when Napoleon, in 1802 re-established the old curse of slavery.

"The evil that men do lives after them."

It was Slavery, not Freedom, that ruined the fair hopes of St. Domingo; it will be Freedom, not Slavery, that will restore her to her ancient and over-estimated splendor. She may yet be our most faithful ally, our best friend, and, to the delight of Milk street and Wall street, our unlimited customer.* Both justice and policy require us to recognize her independence, and to offer her our alliance and protection. It is now a question whether she shall belong to us or to Spain, from whose encroaching hand we have more to fear, than even from the insolence and avarice of England. Spain is no longer a feeble State; with Mexico, Cuba, and Hayti in her possession, she would be-

come a commercial power of the first rank; shall we allow it?

Such was the first great experiment of negro Emancipation; now for the second.

In the very midst of the "Horrors of St. Domingo," the English Abolitionists were waging their war against the slave trade. On the 5th of May, 1778, Mr. Pitt brought forward in Parliament his motion against it; a year later, Wilberforce made his first speech against it, supported by Pitt, Fox, and Burke. Clarkson and the Quakers had moved still earlier; and Zachary Macaulay, father of the brilliant historian, joined with them. In 1807 their efforts abolished the infamous traffic, a year before it was ended here by act of Congress. Christian VII. of Denmark had still earlier, in 1792, forbidden his subjects to take part in it. In 1823 Mr. Canning's resolutions, looking to the final abolition of slavery itself, passed the House of Commons, supported there, and in the nation at large, by Wilberforce, Buxton, the two Macaulays, Lord Brougham, and many other illustrious men.

In 1833, by act of Parliament, after long discussion, slavery was declared forever abolished in all the British colonies. This law went into effect, on the 1st of August 1834, in all the colonies save Mauritius, where it took effect February 1st., 1835. It provided, for an intermediate state between slavery and entire freedom, a system of apprenticeship, which was to continue for six years. In effect it continued but four years, being found to work badly, like all measures of gradual Emancipation; and all the negroes became unconditionally free on the 1st of August, 1838, in the West Indies, and on the first of March, 1839, in Mauritius. The small island of Antigua, however, had at first chosen immediate freedom, rejecting the supposed advantages of apprenticeship, which system, it should be said, the English Abolitionists had not favored. It was a concession to the slaveholders, and like all such concessions had only bad results.

The number of slaves thus set free, was 770,330; they were scattered through nineteen colonies, controlled by a strong central government; the measures for their liberation had been preparing for ten years, and were carried out by humane and resolute governors, in a time of universal peace. These circumstances show the strongest contrast in almost every particular, to the events of

*The customer is the immediate jewel of our souls.—*Emerson.*

1793, in St. Domingo ; naturally, we should expect a greater success than there ; what have the results been ? Ask this question of the first man you meet, and ten to one his answer will be, "Emancipation in the British Colonies is a failure." Ask him how he knows this, and he will tell you "he has heard so,—everybody say so." Ask him to give you figures and facts for it, and he is silent. He has not, and the American people generally, have not taken the trouble to spend an hour in the examination of a matter far more important to us, than it has ever been to England. But without authority, without investigation, in the very face and eyes of notorious facts, he continues to repeat what is at once a mistake and a slander. And why ? Because in this, as in so many other points, public opinion has been under the control of those insolent planters and their commercial allies at the North, from whose tyranny we are now, thank God ! fast freeing ourselves. "It is opinion, not truth," said Sir Walter Raleigh, "that travelleth the world without passport." Forgetting the prejudices which we have learned from slavery, let us take the testimony,—not of planters and slave-drivers ; not of vulgar politicians, aiming at the White House, nor of those profound sages, the traders in cotton and sugar,—no, but of figures,—those impartial reporters, who can neither vote nor hold office, nor buy and sell in any market, but whose silent statement the slaveholder dreads and hates more than all arguments.

Let it be said, first, that emancipation was feared and denounced by most of the white colonists, whose fears were shared to some extent by the British government. No Kentucky Congressman, or New York secessionist can exceed in terrors or threats the "West India Body of Merchants and Planters" resident in England, during the year 1833. These noblemen and gentlemen, interested in the sugar trade, predicted as a consequence of *any* measure of emancipation, "a commercial crisis unparalleled in the history of the empire;" "an extreme danger to the lives and properties of the free persons resident in the colonies;" "confusion and anarchy;" "whole districts, indeed whole colonies," they said, "might be completely depopulated;" they could see nothing in the law proposed "but confiscation of property, and the prospect of all those calamities which must result from a

dissolution of the ties which connect the colonies with the British Empire."^{*}

They declared further, that it "is not even calculated to advance the comforts and well-being of the negro, that it endangers the continuance of the colonies as dependencies of the British Crown, and utterly destroys the possibility of their productive cultivation;" that it would "throw the black population back into a state of barbarism."[†]

These gloomy forebodings have a too familiar sound. How did the event justify them? The colonies are still loyal to the British Crown, as we know to our cost; they are more productive than before emancipation ; no such commercial crisis took place ; the population instead of diminishing at the rate of 5000 annually, as it had done from 1820 to 1834, is increasing ; and the negroes have made extraordinary advances in wealth, civilization, and morality. There has certainly been a decrease in the sugar crop, and there have been many other changes, but of these emancipation has been but in part the cause.

The British Government did not neglect to guard against the imagined dangers. They sent out additional troops, and created a special police ; they made careful provision, as was thought, for the supply of labor ; and under the name of indemnity, they distributed nearly \$100 000 000 among the planters, out of which the laborers' wages could be paid, until the new system had been fairly tested.

The first results of Emancipation astonished every one. In Antigua, where the slaves instantly became their own masters, the public quiet was completely undisturbed. The first of August happened to fall on Friday, and it was wisely resolved by the masters, to give their 30 000 slaves a holiday until Monday, the 4th. These three days were spent by the negroes—first, in prayer and thanksgiving to God for their great deliverance—then, in expressions of joy and congratulation among themselves. On Monday, with few exceptions, they returned to their homes, took up the shovel and the hoe again, and have ever since continued to be peaceful citizens. In the other islands there were similar events : scarcely a riot occurred, and not a single white man lost his life. The only sufferers were a few rash negroes, at Trinidad and St. Christopher's, who attempted

^{*}Proceedings of West India Body, pp. 9, 43, 49, 56 (London, 1833) — (ibid. pp. 95, 134)

a combination against the authorities. In Trinidad, one negro was hanged, and a few others sentenced to hard labor; in St. Christopher's, four or five were transported for life. In only one colony was martial law proclaimed; nor have there since been any serious outbreaks among the negroes, though this is the twenty-eighth year of their freedom. Yet, in Jamaica alone, from 1800-32, there had been five insurrections, of which the last, in the winter of 1831-32, cost the lives of 500 negroes, and involved a destruction of property, amounting to six or seven millions of dollars. Peace, therefore, was the first effect of Freedom.

So much for the fears of murder and pillage entertained by the colonists. The second great evil which they feared, was a complete cessation of labor, or such irregularity as to derange all the operations of business. In some colonies, and especially in Jamaica, this fear has been partly realized; in others, as in Antigua, Barbadoes, the Bahamas, nothing of the kind has occurred. Now as the same cause ought always to produce the same effect, may we not suspect that the diminution of labor in Jamaica and elsewhere, is due to other causes than the emancipation of the laborer? At any rate, may we not find some other reason for it, than the native idleness of the negro, of which Mr. Carlyle and a host of shallowers writes, say so much? May it not spring from a feeling which the Anglo-Saxon of all men ought to respect, since he has so much of it,—*Earth-hunger*—a desire to own land, and not to be the servant of another man? A committee of the House of Commons in 1842, asserted that this was the case. They said:

"Labor has diminished because the blacks have devoted themselves to work more profitable for them than field work, and because they have generally been able, especially in the larger colonies, to purchase lands without difficulty, to live comfortably, and enrich themselves without being obliged to give the planters more than three or four days of seven hours in each week. The low price of land, the ill-will of the planters, the harshness of the laws which establish the relation between the laborer and his employer,—these have been the chief causes of the difficulties experienced."**

To the same effect, Francis Hincks, Gov-

* See Cochin's *Abolition de L'Esclavage*, Tome I., p. 404. We have translated from the French, not having access to the Blue Book in question.

ernor-in-Chief of the Windward Islands, said in 1859;† "There has been a considerable withdrawal of labor from sugar cultivation, in Jamaica. Among the causes, next to the tenure of land, the insolvency of the proprietors has been the chief. The only wonder is, that with such a land tenure as exists in the West Indies, a single laborer remains on the sugar estates." Mr. Sewell, a Canadian by birth, now an American citizen, who visited Jamaica in 1860, and who has written a book of high value, on the Labor Question in the West Indies,‡ speaks in the same tone; "All the impartial testimony that I could obtain in Jamaica," he says, "summed up a crushing contradiction to the unqualified pretension of the planter, that the negro would not work. And when I asked the negro himself, why he preferred the toil of the nine (eight hours in the day and six days in the week) to the comparatively easy labor of the plantation, his explanation was very simple—'Buckra don't pay.' " Be it remembered that Mr. Sewell is no abolitionist.

But let us see how great is the evil complained of. Certainly if idleness has increased in the British colonies, it will show itself by diminished imports and exports; for the foreign and domestic trade of a country is the sure index of its industry. First let us consider the sugar crop alone, in which the alleged diminution has been greatest. There is no doubt that the sugar crop of Jamaica, and of several of the other colonies, has much decreased since emancipation. But it must not be forgotten that this decrease began so long ago as 1807, and continued steadily until 1853, when it seemed to be checked, and there is now, we are told, a slight gain. We must bear in mind, too, that the negroes in Jamaica have decreased, since 1807, nearly twenty per cent., and that the sugar monopoly, which the colonies enjoyed has been entirely superseded by the modern English theories of Free Trade, while the planters have been all this time in a state of chronic bankruptcy, far worse than the financial condition of our Southern States. Remembering all these things, we find by the sure evidence of Arithmetic that all the British sugar colonies produced, during the four last years of slavery, a yearly average of 4,377,971 ewt.; in the four years of ap-

† See *Anti-Slavery Standard* (N. Y.) Sept. 24, 1859, for a report of this speech, made at London, Aug. 1st, 1859.

‡ *The ordeal of Free Labor in the British West Indies*. By Wm. G. Sewell. N. Y., 1861, p. 255.

prenticeship, 4 038 321 cwt., a loss of 8 1-2 per cent.; in the first six years of freedom 3 120 765 cwt.—a loss of 40 per cent.; but in 1847, 4 393 946 cwt.—a slight gain over the last years of slavery. In the two last years of slavery they exported to Great Britain 8 471 744 cwt.; in 1856-7 they exported 8 736 654 cwt.; a gain of 3 per cent. Leaving Jamaica out of view, and also Mauritius, where the crop has immensely increased, by reason of the immigration of Coolies, we find that the remaining fifteen sugar colonies produced in the three last years of slavery 7 405 849 cwt.; in the three years 1855-6-7, 7 427 618 cwt.—a slight gain. From 1827 to 1855 the tonnage of vessels entering at eight of these islands—the only ones reported[§]—had increased more than six per cent.

If the colonies which have been well managed are considered, we shall find a still more marked gain.

The four colonies of Antigua, Barbadoes, Guiana, and Trinidad, exported, in the last four years of slavery, an annual average of 187 000 000 pounds of sugar; from 1856 to 1860, they have annually exported 265-000 000 pounds,—an increase of 41 per cent. For fourteen years before emancipation, the same colonies imported an average of \$8 840 000; in 1859, they imported \$14 600 000,—an increase of 65 per cent. It is true that in Barbadoes and Trinidad, the population has largely increased, but by no means in this ratio; in Guiana and Antigua, there are fewer people than in 1822.

Some of the single colonies show results still more astonishing.

Take Antigua, for example.—the island where the slaves were immediately emancipated. For the fourteen years before Emancipation, the annual imports averaged \$600-000; for 1859, the imports were \$1 280-000, or more than double, while its exports have increased more than 25 per cent. In this instance, free labor has had a fair field from the start, and all has gone well; in Barbadoes, Grenada, Mauritius, and, indeed, most of the colonies, the same is true, though in a less degree. On the whole, we can say that the evils resulting from the scarcity of labor were never so great as had been feared, and in many islands did not exist at all; they were by no means owing wholly to Emancipation, and they will soon be entirely removed.

§ Edinburgh Review, April, 1859.

But we may be told that the prosperity of Cuba is a proof of the advantages of slavery. Nobody denies that Cuba has made, and is making, great advances in wealth. Her exports have risen from \$12 000 000 in 1828, to \$34 000 000 in 1858;|| her imports in the same time, from \$17 000 000 to \$39-000,000. Her population has increased nearly as fast. In 1828, it was 704 487; in 1858, it was at least 1,400,000, of whom half were probably slaves. There has been a similar increase in Porto Rico, the other colony of Spain; but there, the proportion of slaves to the whole population, is only about one-eighth. Both these islands, however, are comparatively thinly settled; especially Cuba, whose population is but 33 to the square mile, or about the same as New Hampshire. Jamaica, on the contrary, has 68, and Barbadoes 843, to the square mile. The abundance of land, together with the fertility of the soil, its favorable position for commerce, and the greater liberality of Spain's commercial policy in recent years, will explain the rapid growth of Cuba, which, after all, is only a quarter part of the growth of Iowa, within the last fifteen years. Let us see if there is not some delusion about the wealth of Cuba; let us apply a more certain test. How much value per man, for her whole population, will the trade of Cuba show for 1858? We answer, \$52. Now, the trade of the French West Indies, which we are told have been ruined by Emancipation, as well as the British colonies, gives a yearly average of \$68 per man, from 1852 to 1858. The imports of Cuba for 1858, are \$27.85 per head; those of Antigua, for 1859, are \$36.57 per head. In 1857, the whole trade of Great Britain with her West India colonies, was over \$52 000 000, giving a greater sum per head than Cuba can show. Where, then, are the boasted advantages of Slavery? Yet in Cuba, Slavery is said to be mild, and the proportion of whites to blacks is nearly four times as great as in the British colonies. We may add that in the fabulous prosperity of St. Domingo, before the French Revolution, her exports and imports are set at about \$40 000 000, giving about the same average per head as in Antigua in 1859.

|| Cochin—Tome II., p. 491.

To this careful French writer, we have been much indebted for statistics concerning the results of Emancipation. Had he thrown these more into a tabular form, he would have much increased the value of his book. Schöeller's volumes are still of great authority, though published fifteen or twenty years ago.

So much for the "ruin" of the British colonies, and the prosperity of the Spanish. Let us now turn to the last argument of the British planters; that Emancipation would barbarize the negro. Nor have we dwelt so long on the pecuniary results of Emancipation because we regard those as the most important; but because they have been most frequently called in question. We believe most firmly in that good old maxim of the Democratic party, "the greatest good of the greatest number,"—interpreting it to mean "the greatest good of all." So even if the 100 000 whites in the British colonies had been pecuniarily ruined by Emancipation, and the prosperity of the colonies destroyed, we think we could have endured it with fortitude, on the assurance that the 800 000 negroes and mulattoes were immeasurably the gainers. Now the whites have not been ruined as a whole, and their own folly is the chief cause of what troubles have come upon them since 1834. Leaving them for the present out of the question, let us consider the moral and social condition of the negroes since Emancipation. Here the testimony is all one way, and of the strongest kind. True, Mr. Carlyle sneers at "Quashee" lying in the sun, with his "pumpkin," and "his saccharine juices,"—but a sneer is not testimony nor argument. Did not Mr. Carlyle once make a rather plain statement about "eighteen million of bores," and did any American believe him?

Because a crabbed Scotchman does not fancy the color, or the features, or the dialect of some of his fellow-men, are we to disbelieve our own eyes and ears, and reject all history till he has manipulated it?

In November 1838, Lord Glenelg, who had been Colonial Secretary, wrote :* "Up to this time the results of the great experiment of abolition have justified the liveliest hopes of its authors and advocates. After having examined carefully the evils that have attended its execution, it seems to me that they must be in great measure attributed to the old colonial system. Whoever has reflected on human nature, and the history of slavery, must have expected that such a reform could not be brought about without embarrassments. I am happy, then, to be able to say that in a short period of time there has been a progress in the social condition which will increase the happiness of mankind, and of which history affords no greater example."

* Quoted by Cochin—Tome I. p., 379.

In 1842 a committee of the House of Commons, reported thus :

"The great act of Emancipation of slaves in the West India colonies has produced the most favorable effects, so far as concerns the physical and social condition of the black population. As to their moral condition, their improvement is more than proved by their constantly increasing eagerness for religious and secular instruction, by their desire, more and more perceptible, to assume the obligations of marriage, and fulfil the duties of domestic life; by the reformation of their morals and their rapid progress in civilization; finally, by the value which they now attach to the acquisition of property and a position of independence."^t

In 1840 a commission of French peers, deputies, and official persons was appointed to examine into the results of British Emancipation, and report a project for the French colonies. At the head of this commission was the now venerable Duke de Broglie, whose position among French philanthropists, is like Lord Brougham's, in England; among its members, were the great De Tocqueville, who had already made a report in favor of Emancipation; (1839) Admiral Mackau, Hippolyte Passy, De Tracy, and other eminent statesmen. They continued their inquiries until March 1843, when their report was presented, written by the Duke de Broglie. After quoting largely from English documents, they say :‡

"Nobody any longer pretends that the blacks are a savage, unsocial race, ready to lay waste the country the instant they are unchained. The event has quieted these apprehensions; the negroes, on the contrary, are a very gentle, very obedient, and wonderfully easy to govern. All the documents which we have examined, agree on this point. We must cease, no less, to represent them as an abject, idle, stupid race, insensible to the pleasures which activity and industry procure, and incapable of the least effort to acquire them. All the documents published by the English Government, entirely confirm this assertion. All the negroes have shown the most lively sense of the blessings of civilization; all have been prompt to do what is necessary to obtain them, and most of them have succeeded. We have shown what a prodigious increase has taken place in the importation of goods for their use. They

^t Quoted in the Duke de Broglie's Report.

[‡] This Report in two quarto volumes, is a marvel of faithful and impartial labor.

have everywhere become artisans, farmers, freeholders; they have built houses, cleared lands, founded villages; and if any one will take the trouble to examine the answers made to the circular questions asked by the English Government, in 1839 and 1840, he will see that these answers are uniform, and that all the colonial authorities agree that the condition of the black peasantry is equal or superior to that of the richest and happiest peasantry of Europe."

M. Jules Lechevalier, a French writer of some note who had visited all these islands, and the Southern States of America, testified before this commission. He said, * "Emancipation has worked MARVELLOUS results for the negro. I can find no other word to express what I think about this. Education, religion, and liberty make a *man* of the negro, such as nobody would recognize—an entirely new being. For my part I answer, Emancipation is very successful. The respect and attachment of the negroes for the English Government has become a sentiment of religion. Thus a black will not name the king without taking off his hat. If you ask him who is the author of the liberty which he has gained, he will reply, 'God and the king.' It should be noticed that this witness was unfriendly to the Abolitionists. Mr. Burnley, for forty years a planter in Trinidad, was introduced by his friend De Tocqueville. Said he : †

"I confess that the majority of the planters expected disorders; but that was not the opinion of reflecting people. For, setting aside the natural mildness of the negroes, what reasonable ground was there to expect violence from men whose moral and social position was being changed for the better? What caused doubt and anxiety to the intelligent colonists was how to keep up the supply of labor. On this point we confess today, for the most part, that our fears were exaggerated, and we believe that the blacks will work like the whites when they are subjected to the same necessities."

We should do the subject an injustice, were we to omit here the testimony of Mr. Emerson to the same point. We quote from his address on the 1st of August 1843, an admirable essay which, it is much to be regretted is out of print.

*Report. 1st Part pp. 49-62.
†3d Part p. 38th, Tome 1.

"It was the sarcasm of Montesquieu, ‡ 'It would not do to suppose that negroes were men, lest it should turn out that whites were not,' for the white has for ages done what he could to keep the negro in that hoggish state. It now appears that the negro race is, more than any other, susceptible of rapid civilization. The Emancipation is observed in the island to have wrought for the negro a benefit as sudden as when a thermometer is brought out of the shade into the sun. It has given him eyes and ears. He is now the principal, if not the only, mechanic in the West Indies, and is, besides, an architect, a physician, a lawyer, a magistrate, an editor, and a valued and increasing political power." §

A more recent authority, Mr. Sewell, brings the evidence down to 1860. "I think," says he, (p. 254.) "that the position of the Jamaica peasant, in 1860, is a standing rebuke to those who, wittingly or unwittingly, encourage the vulgar lie that the African cannot possibly be elevated. Very large numbers work as merchants, mechanics, and tradesmen, and not a few of the ex-slaves of Jamaica, or their children, are members of the Legislature, and fill responsible offices under Government. In the Assembly alone, there are seventeen black and colored men, out of a total of forty-seven. The whole people of Jamaica work;—I am utterly amazed at the progress they have made."

Anthony Trollope confirms most of these statements, in his flippant and shallow book, "*The West Indies, and the Spanish Main*."

But we will not leave the matter to rest on authority, however illustrious or abundant; we will bring forward the evidence that this improvement has taken place.

There are three chief tests of civilization : (1.) The security of life; (2.) The security of property, and the value attached to it; (3.) The sanctity of marriage and the position of woman. Now, these three tests can be applied rigorously by means of statistics, and we find them all verified with increasing force in the West Indies.

It is hardly needful to say that in slavery the right of property is constantly violated towards the slave, and often towards the master; while marriage, properly speaking,

‡See Cochin—Tome II, p. 433, who quotes thus: "Il est impossible que nous supposions que ces gens-là soient des hommes, parce que, si nous les supposons des hommes, on commençerait à croire que nous ne sommes pas nous-mêmes chrétiens." *Esprit des Lois, Lib. Xv.*

§See Conway's "Dial," Cincinnati, 1861.

hardly exists at all. A slave cannot hold property by any sure title, nor secure to himself his own wife and children. The vices thus engendered, continue to poison society long after slavery is destroyed.

It is the universal testimony of travellers, that life is more secure in the British colonies, than during slavery. In the French colonies, we have some exact statistics. Before Emancipation, 47 out of every 100 crimes brought before the court, were crimes against the person; after Emancipation, the proportion fell to 21 out of every 100.

So, too, in regard to property. No doubt there are more cases of theft tried in the courts now than in the days when every planter and overseer held court on his own premises, and administered speedy justice with the cat. But all who know, bear witness that there is less thieving. As for the increased value attached to property, we see that by the eagerness which the negroes show to become proprietors and taxpayers. In St. Vincent there were in 1834, 22 266 slaves, out of a total population of 27 000; there are now about 30 000 in all, of whom 1,500 are whites. The returns for 1857 show that 8209 persons were then living in their own houses, built by themselves since emancipation. Within the last twelve years from ten to twelve thousand acres have been brought under cultivation by small proprietors, owning from one to five acres; and there are no paupers in the island. In Grenada, out of a population of 33 000, the small proprietors, of whom there were none before 1830, now number 2000, and there are 4573 who pay direct taxes. In the whole Island there are only sixty paupers. In Tobago there are 15 500 black and colored persons, of whom 2500 are freeholders, and 2800 pay direct taxes. In St. Lucia the black and colored people number over 24 000, of whom 2045 are freeholders, and 4603 pay taxes. In Antigua, out of 36,000 inhabitants, 15 644 were living in 1858 in houses built since emancipation, and there were but 299 paupers in the island. In Jamaica, 50 000 persons have become proprietors since emancipation. So much for the second test.

In the four French colonies, from 1837 to 1847, there were 1754 marriages of slaves in a population of 235 000; in nine years after emancipation there were 38 468 mar-

riages, or about twenty-five times as many. From all the Islands we have similar accounts.

Judged by these tests, then, civilization is making swift progress among the negroes of the Antilles, instead of the barbarism predicted by the planters.

We come now to the third experiment of abolition,—that of 1848, in the French and Danish colonies. It should be said, in passing, that we have omitted to notice the emancipation of negro slaves in Columbia, Guatemala, Mexico, and the South American republics, all which took place between 1824 and 1830. We have not dwelt on these facts, nor have we included the slaves in the number mentioned above, because we have found so few data concerning them. Their number must have been some hundreds of thousands; the only evidence we have found respecting the condition of the freedmen, is in the testimony of Vice Admiral Fleming, in 1832, before the House of Commons.*

The Admiral visited Caracas in 1828, seven years after emancipation there, and again afterwards; he says: "My opinion, from what I saw, is, that the black population are making rapid progress toward civilization. They maintain themselves perfectly well, without any assistance, either from their former masters, or from the Government."

"General Peyanga, one of the Generals at Caracas, was a perfectly black man, a complete negro; he was a very well educated person, and well read in Spanish literature; he was a very extraordinary man. Many English officers were serving under him; I knew many other black officers of very considerable acquirements, in Caracas." Admiral Fleming, it is observed, was an officer in the Spanish Navy, and had peculiar facilities for learning the condition of the people of Columbia. Gen. Bolivar had brought about emancipation, having previously freed his own slaves. Doubtless, the same testimony might be given, concerning Mexico and the other Spanish republics.

It is well known that the independence of Texas was secured mainly by American slaveholders, who were unwilling to submit to the Mexican law against slavery.

We have already mentioned how slavery was abolished by the National Convention of France, and restored by Napoleon at the cost of the richest of all the colonies—St. Domingo. English conquests still farther

*Cochin, and Sewell, pp. 79-80.

reduced the French possessions, so that, at the restoration of the Bourbons in 1815, they counted but four colonies: Guadaloupe, Guiana, and Martinique in the West Indies, and the Isle of Bourbon, since called Réunion, near Madagascar. In all these were slaves, and though the slave trade was nominally abolished in 1815, it continued, especially in Bourbon, till 1830. The Revolution of July, in that year, gave an impulse to emancipation by raising to power some of those formerly conspicuous as friends of abolition; among them the aged and illustrious Lafayette. This noble enthusiast, as early as 1785, had sent an agent named Richepray to Cayenne, to buy land for the home of emancipated slaves; a generous scheme of the young Marquis, to which Washington, by letter, gave his hearty approval.^f But the work begun by Lafayette, and by Louis XVI., was left to be completed by a third generation. From 1831 to 1840, a succession of laws mitigating the condition of the French slaves, and restricting the power of the master, testified to the wishes of the government of Louis Philippe. These laws were advocated by famous men, first among whom the Duke de Broglie deserves to be named. Guizot, Barrot, De Tracy, De Tocqueville, Lamartine, Passy, Montalembert, Remusat, added their reputation and their eloquence to the cause. In 1840, (March 26), the grand commission, to which reference has already been made, was appointed. A majority of its members, among whom was De Tocqueville, were in favor of simultaneous emancipation after a delay of ten years for preparation; the minority wished for gradual emancipation.

A law, carrying out some of these plans, was passed in 1845, warmly supported by Count Gasparin, whose recent book, "The Uprising of a Great People," shows his singular knowledge of our affairs, and his affection for our country. But such was the influence of the handful of slaveholders, and their mercantile partners, in the seaports of France, that they contrived to delay the final act of liberation till after the Revolution of 1848.

Revolutions are not friendly to old abuses. One of the first acts of the Provisional Government (4th of March, 1848) was to ap-

point a commission to prepare a law of Emancipation.

At the head of this body, Victor Schoelcher was named; an earnest Abolitionist, a brilliant writer, who had twice visited the West Indies, and thoroughly examined their condition, concerning which his books are still the best authority. The Secretary was Wallon, himself an earnest writer on the same and kindred subjects.*

The new law was passed on the 27th of April, 1848, and took effect in May. In the Danish colonies of St. John, St. Thomas, and Santa Cruz, Emancipation was proclaimed by the humane Governor, Van Schelten, in July of the same year. The whole number of slaves for whom indemnity was paid by France, was 248 560, (including 14 000 in the petty colonies of Senegal and Nossi Bé); the whites numbered about 40 000, and the free colored people 100 000. In the Danish islands there were, in 1835,† 27 134 slaves, 8922 free colored persons, and 7 422 whites; in 1848, there were probably about 26 000 slaves. What have been the consequences of freedom in these colonies?

Let it first be said that in the French islands, the slaves were not only set free, but were at once admitted to all the rights of citizens under the new Republic. They were invited to vote at the elections of 1848, and they did so; they were allowed to sit on juries, to bear arms; in short, to assume all the duties of the citizen. The English law, on the contrary, had made every step of the freed slave upward, a slow and costly one. The result showed the greater wisdom of the English method, or, at least, the more fortunate circumstances of its trial.

The year 1848 passed with few troubles; but in the next year there were serious disturbances at Guadaloupe and Martinique, in which the new-made freemen were concerned. Yet the injury done was far less than in the Jannica revolt of 1832; not a hundredth part so great as that inflicted by Bicépanse, in 1802, when, at the command of Napoleon, he re-established slavery in Guadaloupe, at a cost of 20 000 negro lives.‡ 1848-49, were years of Revolution, and the French islands escaped as lightly as the European States.

* The other members were Mestra, Perrinon, Gatine, Gammont, (a clock-maker,) and Perein. See Cochin, Tome I., p. 76.

^f Cochin, Tome I., page 491-2. Schoelcher, *Colonies Étrangères et Indo.*, Tome II., p. 5.

[‡] See The Tourist, Feb. 18, 1833.

(See Cochin, Tome I., p. 7.) The fact is published more at length in Mr. Sumner's lecture on Lafayette, given in Boston, October, 1830, wherein he quotes Washington's letter,

There was a derangement of commerce and agriculture for a few years. The trade of the colonies fell off 40 per cent. in 1848, as compared with 1847, which was a very prosperous year. At the same time, the trade of France fell off 25 per cent. From 1848-53 there is a falling off of 10 per cent., as compared with the five years before Emancipation; but in the five subsequent years, from 1852-57, there is a gain of nearly 50 per cent., and the four colonies are steadily gaining in wealth and numbers. We have already spoken of the effect of slavery to diminish population in the West Indies. Since emancipation, this tendency has been checked in the French colonies, though it still continues in some of the English islands. The population of the French possessions, in 1836, was 376 296; in 1846, it had fallen to 374 548; in 1856, it had risen to 387 821, exclusive of immigration.[§]

The Dutch colony of Guiana, where slaves are still held, gives a most atrocious example of this loss of population.[¶] About 1800 there were 80 000 slaves there, producing an annual value of \$7 000 000; in 1845 there were but 43,285 slaves and 9712 free blacks; a decrease of 46 per cent. in 45 years, or, if we include the free blacks, of 34 per cent. But these 43 000 slaves only produced in 1845 a value of \$700 000. Of 917 plantations 636 have been abandoned,[¶] and the production has fallen away nine-tenths; yet Emancipation has never troubled the Dutch sugar growers.

From the Danish colonies since Emancipation we have few statistics, but those are all favorable to freedom. We know that St. Thomas is a rich emporium, and that Santa Cruz flourishes. Some disorders, by which the negroes were the greatest sufferers, attended emancipation; but they were occasioned by the ill temper of the planters, and were soon quieted by the excellent government. For the past ten years we hear no tidings of tumult or distress from them.

In 1859 when Theodore Parker visited Santa Cruz and St. Thomas, a member of his family wrote thus of the freed slaves:^{||}

"I often think how delighted you would be with the results of Emancipation, as we see them all around us, and have abundant opportunity to examine them; twenty thousand

people raised at once from the condition of cattle to that of responsible beings,—protected and assisted, if need be, by the Government. The thrifty and industrious already succeed in laying up enough to put them forward in the world, build a comfortable little home in town, and bring their children up to trades. They have great pride in being independent. . . . They are gradually acquiring a pride of matrimony. A noble young man here, an Episcopal minister, has established a day school for the colored children of his parish, and I was never so pleased with any school I have ever visited. The progress has been surprising indeed."

"Here, as elsewhere," says Coehin, "Slavery did no good, and Emancipation no harm. A hurricane, or the change of a single degree in the thermometer, would have had an influence more hurtful and more lasting, than the fortunate release of 25 000 or 30 000 men, unjustly enslaved."

In the single Swedish island of St. Bartholomew, there were in 1846, 531 slaves, out of a population of 1700. These have all since been freed by purchase gradually made by King Oscar, \$10 000 a year having been voted for this purpose by the Swedish Parliament. We have no information about the effects; if they had been bad, we should, no doubt, have heard of it.

We have now spoken of the condition of all the West India Islands where Emancipation has taken place. It has been shown that all from which we have statistics, except Jamaica and Hayti, are more wealthy than during slavery, and that all, without exception, are increasing their trade and production; that the ruin of Hayti and Jamaica, so far as it exists, is owing to many other causes than Emancipation,—chiefly in the one case, to the cruel policy of Napoleon, and the ungenerous course of France, Spain, and the United States,—and in the other, to the folly of the planters, and the evils begotten by slavery. It has been shown, too, how delusive is the assumed prosperity of Cuba and Porto Rico—lands now passing through the hot fit of the slaveholding fever, but which must soon be let blood by Emancipation, as in Hayti, or pass into the ague fit and melancholy decline of the Dutch colonies, which slavery still curses. It has been shown that the negro is not bloodthirsty, that he is not idle, that he is capable of civilization. Let us add that he is not a pauper,—contrary to

[§] Coehin, Tome I., p. 276.

[¶] See Coehin, II., p. 297.

^{||} Edinburgh Review, April, 1859.

[¶] 27th Report of the Am. A. S. Society, N. Y., 1861—p. 229-10.

the theories of many Americans, who fear to do an act of justice, lest we of the North shall be overrun by black paupers from the South. No, the paupers of the South are clothed in soft raiment, and live delicately, and are, or would be, in Kings' houses. It is a curious, but well attested fact, that among the free colored people of the British West Indies, in 1826, the proportion of paupers was one in 370, while among the whites it was one in 40.* In many places, the proportion was still more surprising. In Barbadoes, there were 14 500 whites, and 4500 free blacks; there were 996 white paupers, and one black one! In Berbice, there were two colored paupers out of 900, and seventeen white ones out of 600. In Jamaica, the free colored were to the whites as two to one, while the white paupers were to the colored, as two to one. In Massachusetts, in 1855, the number of paupers was one in 148. No return was made of colored paupers, but we are told that the returns of Philadelphia, where there were in 1850, about 20 000 colored persons, show a much greater proportion of white, than of colored paupers.

Many authorities have already been quoted to show the happy results of Emancipation, and we have been careful to take the testimony of enemies as well as friends. Let us add a few more to the list.

In 1839, De Tocqueville wrote thus ;† "Many persons, preoccupied by the recollections of St. Domingo, are led to believe that the Emancipation of the slaves will occasion bloody collisions between the two races, whence the expulsion or the massacre of the whites may soon follow. *Everything leads to the belief that these fears are imaginary, or at least, much exaggerated.* Nothing which has taken place in the English colonies leaves room to suppose that Emancipation would be accompanied with the disasters which are dreaded."

In the Encyclopedia Britannica, a work of the highest authority, occurs this passage in the article on Slavery, published in 1859 :

"There can be but one opinion regarding the results of Emancipation entertained by any man who will dispassionately investigate the condition of the colored populations in the West Indies; and that opinion will redound, in the highest degree, to the sa-

gacity of those who then advocated the deliverance of the slave. England, by freeing her slaves, performed a politic, as well as a very just act."

Mr. Sewell, who has already been quoted, says, at the close of his book, written in 1860 : "The act of British Emancipation has been widely abused; but its detractors must live among the people it disenthralled, if they would learn the value at which it *can* be estimated. Time, which develops the freedom that act created, adds continually to its lustre. Freedom, when allowed fair play, injured the prosperity of none of these West Indian colonies. It saved them from a far deeper and more lasting depression than any they have yet known. It was a boon conferred upon all classes of society; upon planter and upon laborer; upon commerce and agriculture; upon industry and education; upon morality and religion. And if a perfect measure of success remains to be achieved, let not freedom be condemned; for the obstacles to be overcome were great, and the workers few and unwilling."

The Hon. Charles Francis Adams, in a letter written July 21st, 1860, says :

"West India Emancipation is gravely pronounced a failure. I have heard it so described on the floor of the House of Representatives. The only reason given, is that the British Islands do not produce so many pounds of coffee and sugar as they did when they could force them out of the bones and muscles of slaves. Now mankind may, by possibility, be tolerably well off, and yet do entirely without coffee and sugar. But how can they be happy without good security for their right to seek happiness in their own way? . . . Yet they tell us, because coffee and sugar fail there is no good in Emancipation. If, by reason of this failure, it could be shown that there was misery and famine in the land, that starvation was in a fair way to turn the garden into a wilderness, I should be ready to concede something to the argument. *But I hear of no such thing as that.*"

The Hon. Charles Sumner, in a letter of July 30th, 1860, says :

"Well proved facts vindicate completely the policy of Emancipation, even if it were not commanded by the simplest rules of morality. . . . Two different Governors of this island (Jamaica)‡ have assured me that, with

* Blue Book, May 9, 1826. Quoted in The Tourist 1832.

† Report on the Abolition of Slavery in the French Colonies. By Alexis De Tocqueville. (Translation) Boston, 1840. p. 26. This is a pamphlet of 54 pages.

‡ See New York Independent of March 20, for an important letter of Gov. Hinks on this point.

all their experience there, they looked upon Emancipation as a blessing."

Here ends our chapter on the West Indies. What inference can be drawn from all this?

We answer—First: *That Emancipation in the United States is safe.* If it was so in Jamaica, where the whites were as one to fifteen, will it not be in Maryland, where they are more than three to one, in Kentucky, where they are nearly four to one, in Missouri, where they are nearly ten to one?

Second: *It will be politic.* If the freeing of half a million of slaves in 1793, saved St. Domingo from falling into the hands of England, the freeing of four millions, in 1862, may save the Cotton States from a like fate, which even our recent and brilliant victories perhaps may hasten.

Third: *It must not be attended by forced colonization.* If the great want of the West Indies is labor, with what expectation can we ship out of our Southern States two-thirds of the laboring population? Immigration is the demand in the West Indies, it would be folly for us to try emigration.

Fourth. *It must not be gradual, but immediate and complete.* If the experience of Antigua and Jamaica teaches anything, it teaches that simultaneous and entire emancipation is the safest, the cheapest, and the wisest course.

Fifth. *It will attract more white men to the South than it will send black men to the North.* This is the opinion of a sensible fugitive, to whom we owe the statement; but the history of immigration to the West Indies, and to Mauritius and Bourbon proves it true. Why should the negroes come here after emancipation? On the contrary, reasons both of climate and of political economy will carry them South in great numbers, not only from the border States, but from the North and from Canada.

Finally, these facts prove, what no man of lofty virtue ever can doubt,—*That justice is always expedient.*

The Greeks had a story which devout old Herodotus has preserved, that Glaucus, the

Spartan, wishing to commit an injustice, and to confirm it by an oath, asked of the oracle if he might do so. "Glaucus, son of Epicydes!" answered the priestess, in her solemn chant, "for the present perjury is profitable, and theft; swear, then, for death lies in wait for the just and the unjust. But there is a nameless child of perjury, without hands, without feet, yet swiftly she pursues till she clutches and destroys thy race, and all thy house. But the race of the just man flourishes forever."

Thus the oracle. "And now," adds the narrator, "there is no descendant of Glaucus at all, nor any branch of the stock of Glaucus; but he has been cast forth from Sparta, root and branch."

Centuries earlier, the wise Athenian law-giver, in grave verse, which Demosthenes loved to quote, had warned his countrymen of the same truth.*

My soul, Athenians, prompts me to relate
What miseries upon injustice wait.
Riches by theft, and ezegezne to possess,
The sacred bounds of Justice ye transgress;
Who silent sees the present, knows the past,
And will revenge these injuries at last.
But Justice all things orderly designs,
And in strict fetters the unjust confines.
What's sour she sweetens, and allays what cloys,
Wrong she repels, ill in the growth destroys,
Softens the stubborn, the unjust reforms,
And in the State calms all seditious storms.
Bitter dissensions by her rule suppress,
Who wisely governs all things for the best,

And earlier yet, the stern warnings of the Hebrew sage, who led forth his despised people from the oppression of Egypt, had announced the eternal law with no doubtful voice:

"Beware that thou forget not the Lord thy God, in not keeping his commandments and his judgments, and his statutes which I command this day: lest when thou hast eaten and art full, and hast built goodly houses, and dwelt therein:

"And when thy flocks and thy herds multiply, and thy silver and thy gold is multiplied, and all that thou hast is multiplied:

"Then thine heart be lifted up, and thou forget the Lord thy God, . . . And then say in thine heart, my power and the might of my hand hath gotten me this wealth,

And it shall be, if thou do at all forget the Lord thy God, I testify against you this day that ye shall surely perish.

As the nations which the Lord destroyeth before your face, so shall ye perish: because ye would not be obedient unto the voice of the Lord your God."—{Deuteronomy viii 11-20.

*Demosthenes. False Legation, 255. Stanley's Translation in the History of Philosophy.